

**6/4/12 - Monday, June 4, 2012**

**CITY OF EAU CLAIRE  
PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Meeting of June 4, 2012**

City Hall, Council Chambers, 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Messrs. Kayser, Duax, Strobel, Larson, Weld, Pearson, Hibbard, Mses. Mitchell, Ebert

Staff Present: Messrs. Tufte, Noel, Ivory, Genskow, Amundson

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kayser.

**1. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Hibbard motioned to nominate Mr. Kayser to be chair. Seconded by Mr. Weld and the motioned carried. Mr. Kayser abstained. Ms. Mitchell motioned to nominate Mr. Strobel as the vice chair. Mr. Weld seconded and the motioned carried. Mr. Duax motioned to nominate Mr. Pearson to be the secretary. Seconded by Mr. Strobel and the motion carried.

**2. REZONING (Z-1506-12) “ C-3H to R-4P, 2851 Hendrickson Drive**

Mr. Tufte presented the request to rezone a parcel from C-3H to R-4P and to adopt the General Development Plan for the Metro Crossing Apartments located at 2851 Hendrickson Drive. The plan shows a four-story, 84-unit apartment building. The Comprehensive Plan notes the general area for high density residential. The density of the project meets the standards of the R-4 district. Primary site access is off W. MacArthur Avenue and underground and surface lot parking is provided to meet standards. There is a proposed road realignment that connects W. MacArthur Avenue to Hendrickson Drive™s frontage road. The right-of-way for the road change will need to be negotiated with the City. There is adequate traffic and utility infrastructure to the site. A reuse of the site is needed since the existing hotel is under demolition. Final site plans will have to be approved before building permit issuance.

Applicant, Jim Rooney, 13167 CTH æOO of Chippewa Falls, spoke on behalf of the project. He addressed the building™s four-story height noting there are several multi-storied buildings in the area. The height allows more green space for the site. The project is market-rate and not necessarily for students. Demand is currently strong for rental apartments. The site could be developed in the spring, with an occupancy date of June 2014.

Mr. Hibbard believed apartments along State Highway 37/85 were not a good project location. Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Weld, Mr. Duax, and Mr. Kayser were in favor of the redevelopment.

Mr. Duax recommended approval of the rezoning per the conditions in the staff report. Mr. Pearson second and the motion carried. Mr. Hibbard voted nay.

**3. SITE PLAN (PZ-1211) “ Public Parking Lot, E. Madison Street and Forest Street**

Mr. Amundson presented the request to approve a site plan in a P-Public District for a public parking lot. The 79-stall parking lot would be at the northwest corner of the Madison and Forest Streets. Part of the parking lot is on Xcel Energy™s property and easements will be negotiated. Access to Xcel™s substation will be provided. Sidewalk and trail connections are provided. A porous pavement alternative has been proposed to help the efficient movement of stormwater. Cost increases are primary due to the porous pavement solution. The North River Fronts Neighborhood Association voted 10 to 6 in favor of the proposal. The lot will be used by park users, events goers and the neighborhood, especially during winter alternate street side parking.

Andrew Werthmann, 616 Wisconsin Street, said the neighborhood was not included in the planning process initially. Different locations for the parking lot might have been better than right on the river. He thought a new parking ramp is not necessary at this point near RCU.

James Hanke, with Xcel Energy, stated their land can be leased to the City for the parking lot. The substation is permanent and might have to be expanded in the future to the south 30 feet. From their perspective they thought the parking lot and substation uses work well together.

Lisa Aspenson, 617 3rd Street, stated she is on the Business Improvement District (BID) and the request for this parking lot was made back in 2009. The need for parking is great and the BID is willing to share in some costs. She has monitored parking over time in the neighborhood and has seen parking on landscaping due to the demand. The public uses her business parking lot when they should not. She thought the corner site is the best place for the parking lot.

Gerald Newman, 415 Forest Street, asked if the parking lot could be located at the old Burger King parcel instead. He was concerned about drainage and flooding in the proposed area.

Jeremy Gragert, 1109 Barland Street, was not in favor of the parking lot since it did not promote alternative transportation modes to reach the park from different parts of the city.

Alex Schneider, 618 Holm Avenue, questioned if we need to encourage more driving to the park. He sees a lot of empty parking

stalls downtown during the day.

Mr. Weld thought the site is the best spot for the parking lot. Mr. Strobel was supportive. Mr. Duax was concerned about the long-term problem of parking in the area and in greater downtown, as well as the construction costs. Mr. Larson noted parking demand is a dynamic situation and sometimes hard to predict with development in the downtown. Ms. Mitchell was supportive of the project. Mr. Pearson said the neighborhood voted in favor which shows preference. Mr. Kayser stated the size of the lot works next to the substation, but bike racks should be included.

Ms. Mitchell recommended approval of the site plan per the conditions in the staff report. Mr. Larson second and the motion carried. Mr. Duax voted nay.

#### **4. SITE PLAN (SP-1219) “ Sign Plan, 2540 S. Hastings Way**

Mr. Ivory presented the request from Fireside Hearth and Home to approve a sign plan to allow an additional wall sign in lieu of a ground sign. The proposed wall sign would be located on the west side of the building. The design of the sign is compatible with the existing signage. The sign plan shows four signs on the multi-tenant building with one ground sign. Maximum allowance is three signs for Fireside but with the in-lieu provision, a fourth sign is allowed if the applicant can meet standards. The applicant will remove the nonconforming ground sign along the frontage road.

Applicant, Randall Nickerson, with Fireside Hearth and Home stated the highway bypass has made it challenging to see and access his business. Adding signage is his plan to try to increase business.

Mr. Strobel motioned to approve the sign plan per the conditions in the staff report. Mr. Weld second and the motion carried.

#### **5. DISCUSSION/DIRECTION**

##### **A. Washington Street Sign District Request**

Mr. Ivory presented the Washington Street Sign District. The request came from business owners in the area. The sign district would overlay its Central Business District zoning and allow sidewalk and projecting signs. Electronic center signs would need conditional use permits.

The commission recommended moving forward with drafting an ordinance and setting up public hearings.

##### **B. Neighborhood Notification**

Mr. Tufte presented background information on the type and process of notifying the public in the City and in neighborhoods. Notifications depend on>

Mr. Hibbard stated public notification posters or signs on the project site might help make the public more aware. Ms. Mitchell noted social media could be used. The commissioners directed staff to do research on improving the P-Public notification process and how to disseminate Plan Commission agenda and packets to the neighborhood presidents.

##### **C. Waterways Plan**

Mr. Tufte presented the final draft of the plan and asked for any last corrections. Figure 13 will be changed to add existing and planned boat launches. Staff is asking the commission to initiate the public hearing process. Corrections were noted by staff.

##### **D. Wisconsin APA Chapter Award “ West Riverside District Plan**

Mr. Tufte stated the City won a State planning award for the West Riverside District Neighborhood Plan. The State chapter was pleased with the plan and how the public and businesses were included. They liked the fact the plan encouraged starting a new neighborhood association to help carry out the plan™s implementation section.

##### **E. Code Compliance Items**

Commissioners asked staff to look into dust issues off the temporary parking lot at N. Barstow and Wisconsin streets and send out code enforcement letters to violators along Western Avenue.

#### **6. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of May 14, 2012, were approved.

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Tom Pearson  
Secretary